Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1, 2-17 and 19-37 are pending in the above-identified application. Claims 2 and 18 are canceled; claims 36 and 37 are newly added.

Claims 1-4, 8-13, 15-20 and 24-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spagna in view of Oles et al. This ground for rejection is overcome by the cancellation of claims 2 and 18 and by the amendments to claims 1, 17, 30 and 35. In particular, neither Spagna, Oles et al. nor their combination disclose or suggest,

storage means, arranged to store received electronic messages in association with respective means for identifying each received message; and

at least one mail client, arranged to render to one or more of said first agents electronic messages distributed thereto in order that said one or more first agents may prepare an appropriate response message to at least part of an electronic message rendered thereto, the or each mail client including:

means ... for causing a second electronic message to be generated, which second electronic message includes at least part of said first electronic message;

means for generating a routing tag, which routing tag includes the respective message identifying means associated with said first electronic message;[and]

... associating, by means of said respective message identifier included in said routing tag, said returned second electronic message with said first electronic message stored in said storage means

as set forth in claim 1, amended claims 17, 30 and 35 and newly added claims 36 and 37 include similar recitations.

Basis for the amendments may be found throughout the specification and in particular on page 11 lines 28 to 30; page 15 lines 16 to 19; page 12 lines 25 to 31; original Claim 11; original Claim 2; page 18 lines 20 to 24; and page 4 lines 13 to 22.

Spagna discloses a system for preventing routing Maelstrom loops of automatically routed electronic mail. Spagna teaches that when a mail message is received by a first mail client (intelligent agent) it is automatically routed onto a second mail client unless a special identifying tag is detected in which case the message is terminated thereby ending the routing loop. (See col. 6, lines 53-57). It is noted that Spagna relates to the automatic routing

of electronic messages among its clients and is not concerned with the rendering of electronic messages to agents so that a response message can be prepared or with the processing of second electronic messages that are created by said agents in response to a rendered first message. Consequently, Spagna does not disclose any of the features identified above. Moreover, it would be counterproductive in a system such as that disclosed by Spagna to store received electronic messages or to render them to agents so that a response may be prepared, or to create a second message in response to input from a first agent to whom a message has been rendered.

In particular, it is noted that Spagna's identifying tags are included directly in a received electronic message by the mail client (see col. 6, lines 30-40) and are not included in a second mail message which is created in response to an input from the first agent to whom the first received electronic message is rendered. Because Spagna does not disclose or suggest generating a second message, it can not disclose or suggest associating the second message with the first message, as required by the amended claims.

Oles et al. are concerned only with text categorization and the routing of electronic messages based on the results of text categorization and are not concerned with the rendering of received messages to one or more agents and to the subsequent processing of second messages created in response to an input from an agent to whom a received message has been rendered. Accordingly, Oles et al. do not disclose or suggest any of the features that are missing from amended claims 1, 17, 30 and 35 or newly added claims 36 and 37.

Because neither Spagna nor Oles et al. includes these features of claims 1, 17 and 30, these claims are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Spagna and Oles et al. Claims 3, 4, 8-13, 15 and 16 depend from claim 1; claims 19, 20 and 24-29 depend from claim 17 and claims 31-34 depend from claim 30. Consequently, these claims are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Spagna and Oles et al. for at least the same reasons as claims 1, 17 and 30.

Claims 5-7, 14 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spagna, Oles et al. and Wanderski et al. This ground for rejection is overcome by the amendments to claims 1 and 17, described above. Spagna and Oles et al. are described above. Wanderski et al. describe the automatic creation of an XML dialect and

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corresponding document type definition. Wanderski et al. do not disclose or suggest the rendering of received messages to one or more agents and to the subsequent processing of second messages created in response to an input from an agent to whom a received message has been rendered. Accordingly, Wanderski et al. do not disclose or suggest any of the features that are missing from amended claims 1 and 17 or newly added claims 36 and 37. Thus, claims 1 and 17 are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Spagna, Oles et al., and Wanderski et al. and claims 5-7, 14 and 21-23 which variously depend from claims 1 and 17 are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Spagna, Oles et al., and Wanderski et al.

It is noted that claims 36 and 37 have been drafted to include the above-referenced limitations and, thus, are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Spagna, Oles et al., Wanderski et al. or any combination of these references.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 3-17 and 19-35 and that newly added claims 36 and 37 be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth N. Nigon, Reg. No. 31,549
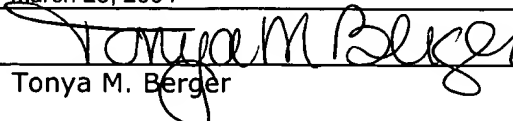Attorney(s) for Applicant(s)

Dated: March 23, 2004

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The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge payment to Deposit Account No. **18-0350** of any fees associated with this communication.

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March 23, 2004

Tonya M. Berger